

To: Appropriations Committee

December 9, 2009

To Whom it may concern:

I am a constituent and I absolutely oppose any raid on the Community Investment Funds.

My family and I are working farmers in this State and absolutely have seen the benefits that these funds have had both personally and for many other farmers we know. These funds are so important to our growing of food and fiber for the people of CT and New England. Our diversifying and expanding with the help of these funds has created additional jobs for CT and helped us to stay in business in these trying times. Our customer base is growing despite these difficult economic times. We provide an excellent product and it is grown and raised close to them, they like that.. With all the food safety and scares out there in the marketplace customers are insisting they want to "know their farmer". We can only hope to do this if we are able to market our business successfully and are able to secure our farmland for the future.

The farmland preservation is a great tool to secure the land base. It is one way that farmers are able to ensure that their farmland will always be farmed and at the same it allows them use the revenues gained to purchase additional land for their operation, fund expansions, or ultimately use it for self-preservation(retirement). For many farmers who have worked their land for generations the land is the only thing that they have, it is their 401K. The continuation of a viable farmland preservation budget would allow more farmers who would like to consider this option a great opportunity rather than to sell out to developers, where the land ultimately would be lost forever.

In closing I would also like to mention that when this CIA was created the land record fees were intended to fund programs specifically defined by statute. These programs are all a huge benefit to preserving the State's character through not only the land preservation & grant to farmers and towns, but also for historical restoration and affordable housing. Each of these programs are a benefit to all who live in this state and affect our quality of life here.

Please I urge you to stay strong, keep the CIA funds intact and help CT move in a more sensible way through these difficult times. These positive programs NEED to continue to secure our rural heritage, if we lose more farmers (especially dairy farmers with so much land base) you will see irreversible changes in directions the state.

I thank you for your time and attention to this VERY important matter.

Nancy Lee Barrett
Scantic Valley Farm
Somers, CT.06071